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On the syncretism of *tau*⁵⁵ 到 ‘arrive’ and its pathway of grammaticalization in the Pingjiang dialect (Sinitic)

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The Pingjiang 平江 dialect (Chengguanzhen 城关镇 variety) of Gan 赣 is a Sinitic language spoken in the northeast Hunan Province 湖南省 bordering Jiangxi 江西省 and Hubei 湖北省. The present paper sets out to analyze the polyfunctionality of the verb *tau*⁵⁵ 到 ‘reach, arrive’ in Pingjiang and propose a possible pathway of grammaticalization for it.

1. Background

Locating on the border of Hunan, Jiangxi and Hubei Province, the inhabitants of Pingjiang County practice the different dialects. The following maps show the geographical location and the dialectal diffusion of Pingjiang.

1. Background

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Map 1. the location of Pingjiang County

1. Background



図 17 筆者による平江諸方言の区分

Map 2. Dialectal diffusion in Pingjiang (Zhang. 2009)

Bao & Yan. 1986 :

Subgroups 1, 2 & 3: Gan (贛語) ;

Subgroups 4 & 5: Xiang (湘語) ;

Subgroup 6: Hakka (客家話).

2. *tau*⁵⁵ 到 in the Chengguan dialect of Pingjiang

- ▶ Lexical verb ‘reach, arrive’;
- ▶ Verbal resultative;
- ▶ Allative ‘to’;
- ▶ Locative ‘at’, ‘within’;
- ▶ Ablative ‘from’;
- ▶ Comitative ‘with’ & Coordinative conjunction ‘and’;
- ▶ Benefactive & Malefactive ‘for’;
- ▶ Dative ‘to’;
- ▶ Semi-disposal marker;

2.1. Lexical verb ‘reach, arrive’

Like Standard Mandarin, *tau*⁵⁵ 到 is a lexical verb in the Chengguan dialect meaning ‘reach, arrive’:

(1) 我 到 哒 屋。

ŋo²¹ tau⁵⁵ ta⁴² u⁴².

1SG arrive PFV house

I’ve arrived home.

2.2. Verbal resultative

*tau*⁵⁵ 到 is also a verbal resultative in the Chengguan:

- (2) 我 看 到 只 鸟 落 飞。
- ŋo²¹ k^han⁵⁵ tau⁵⁵ tɕa⁴² tiau³⁵ lo⁴² ko³⁵ fi³³.
- 1SG see RES CLF bird PROG there fly
- I saw a flying bird.

2.3. Allative ‘to’

*tau*⁵⁵ 到 can also be an allative preposition ‘to’ in the Chengguan dialect:

- (3) 只 佢- 走 到 河 里 去 哒。
i³⁵ tɕa⁴² ŋa¹³-tsei⁴² tsœu³⁵ tau⁵⁵ xo¹³ li⁴² tɕi⁵⁵ ta⁴².
this CLF boy-DIM walk into river inside go PFV
This boy walked into the river.

2.4. Locative ‘at’, ‘within’

Unlike the Standard Mandarin, *tau*⁵⁵ 到 is a locative preposition in the Chengguan dialect, as shown below:

(4) 我 今 夜 不 出 去，到 屋 里 吃 饭。

ŋo²¹ tɕin³³ ia²² pɛi⁴² tɕuei⁴² tɕ^{hi}⁵⁵ tau⁵⁵ u⁴² li⁴² tɕ^{hi}ia⁴² fan²².

1SG tonight NEG out go at house inside eat rice

I won't go out this evening and will have dinner at home.

2.4. Locative ‘at’, ‘within’

Apart from the meaning ‘at’, *tau*⁵⁵ 到 can also express the meaning ‘within, among’:

(5) 尔 到 笔 内 里 选 一 只。
n²¹ tau⁵⁵ i³⁵ ŋa⁵⁵ pi⁴² lai²² li⁴² ɕiɛn³⁵ i⁴² tɕa⁴².

2SG within this some pen inner inside choose one CLF

Choose one within these pens.

The locative function of *tau*⁵⁵ 到 is not rare in Sinitic languages, as in the Jishui dialect (Gan), the Ruicheng dialect and the Wenxi dialect (Mandarin 官话) (Li & Wu. 2018).

2.5. Ablative preposition ‘from’

In the structure : $\text{tau}^{55} + \text{NP}_{(\text{place})} + \text{V}_{(\text{deprivation})}$, tau^{55} 到 is employed as an ablative preposition ‘from’:

(6) 钱 到 尔 压 岁 钱 内 里 出。
 $i^{35} \quad \eta a^{55} \quad t\epsilon^{h} i \epsilon n^{13} \quad \text{tau}^{55} \quad n_i^{21} \quad tsa^{42} \quad \epsilon i^{55} \quad t\epsilon^{h} i \epsilon n^{13} \quad lai^{22} \quad li^{42} \quad t\varsigma u \epsilon i^{42}.$

this some money from 2SG new year's money inside take out

You should take out this money from your new year's money.

This ablative function of tau^{55} 到 resembles a lot *Câng* 共 of Southern Min (Chappell, Peyraube & Wu. 2011. 323-324).

2.6. Comitative ‘with’

When *tau*⁵⁵ 到 is used as a comitative preposition ‘with’, we can add an adverb before it:

(7) 佢 尽 到 我 。

e²¹ tɕ^hin²² tau⁵⁵ ŋo²¹ tɕiɛ⁴² tɕin³³ ko²¹.

3SG often with 1SG quarrel PART

He often quarrels with me.

2.7. Coordinative conjunction ‘and’

*tau*⁵⁵ 到 can also be a coordinative conjunction:

- (8) 多 吃 水 果 到 蔬 菜
to³³ tɕ^hia⁴² ɕy³⁵ kuø³⁵ tau⁵⁵ sɿ³³ ts^hai⁵⁵
more eat fruit and vegetable
Eat more fruits and vegetables.

2.8. Benefactive & Malefactive ‘for’

*tau*⁵⁵ 到 can be used as a benefactive or malefactive preposition in the Chengguan dialect:

- (9) 我 ☐ 娘 到 我 买 哒 只 笔。
ŋo²¹ li⁴² nioŋ¹³ tau⁵⁵ ŋo²¹ mai²¹ ta⁴² tɕa⁴² pi⁴²
1SG POSS.KIN mother for 1SG buy PFV CLF pen
My mother bought a pen for me.

2.8. Benefactive & Malefactive ‘for’

*tau*⁵⁵ 到 can be used as a benefactive or malefactive preposition in the Chengguan dialect :

(10) 佢 到 我 把 只 杯 打 烂 㗎。

e²¹ tau⁵⁵ ŋo²¹ pa³⁵ tɕa⁴² pai³³ ta³⁵ lan²² ta⁴²

He has broken my cup (broken the cup for me).

2.9. Dative preposition ‘to’

When *tau*⁵⁵ 到 is used as a preposition to introduce the indirect object, the verb must be a ‘speech verb’ as the following examples show:

- (11) 快 去 到 尔 娘 爷 报 喜。
k^huai⁵⁵ tɕ^hi⁵⁵ tau⁵⁵ n²¹ li⁴² nioŋ¹³ ia¹³ pau⁵⁵ ɕi³⁵
quickly go to 2SG POSS.KIN parents announce good news
Go and tell your parents this good news.

2.9. Dative preposition ‘to’

- (12) 我 不 想 到 尔 话 事。
ŋo²¹ pɛi⁴² ɕion³⁵ tau⁵⁵ n_i²¹ ua²² sɿ²²
1SG NEG want to 2SG talk things
I don't want to talk to you.

This kind of preposition (must occur with ‘speech’ verb) can be found in many Sinitic languages, such as *ai*⁵⁵ 挨 in Kaiyuan dialect (Zhu. 2013) and *kēn* 跟 in South-western Mandarin (Li & Liu. 2015).

2.10. Semi-disposal marker

*tau*⁵⁵ 到 can introduce the undergoer of the action in the disposal construction, but only in three specific structures.

a. *tau*⁵⁵ + **O**₁ + **V** [+causative] + **O**₂

- (12) 到 他 急 出 哒 一 身 汗。
- tau*⁵⁵ *t*^h*a*³³ *t**ɛ**i*⁴² *t*ʂ^h*u**ɛ**i*⁴² *t**a*⁴² *i*⁴² ʂən³³ *k**o*²¹ xən²²
- DM 3SG worry out PFV one CLF PART sweat
- He is so worried that he sweats inside-out.

2.10. Semi-disposal marker

b. *tau*⁵⁵ + O₁[+entity] + V + O₂[+part]

(13) 他 到 橘 子 剥 哒 皮。

t^ha³³ tau⁵⁵ tɕuei⁴² tsɿ³⁵ po⁴² ta⁴² p^{hi}13

3SG DM orange peel PFV skin

He peeled the orange (of its skin).

2.10. Semi-disposal marker

c. *tau*⁵⁵ + O₁ + V + O₂[+instrument]

(14) 到 桌 子 罩 块 布 。

*tau*⁵⁵ *tso*⁴² *tsɿ*³⁵ *tsau*⁵⁵ *kuai*⁵⁵ *pu*⁵⁵

DM desk cover CLF cloth

Cover the desk with a piece of cloth.

3. Pathway of grammaticalization of *tau*⁵⁵ 到

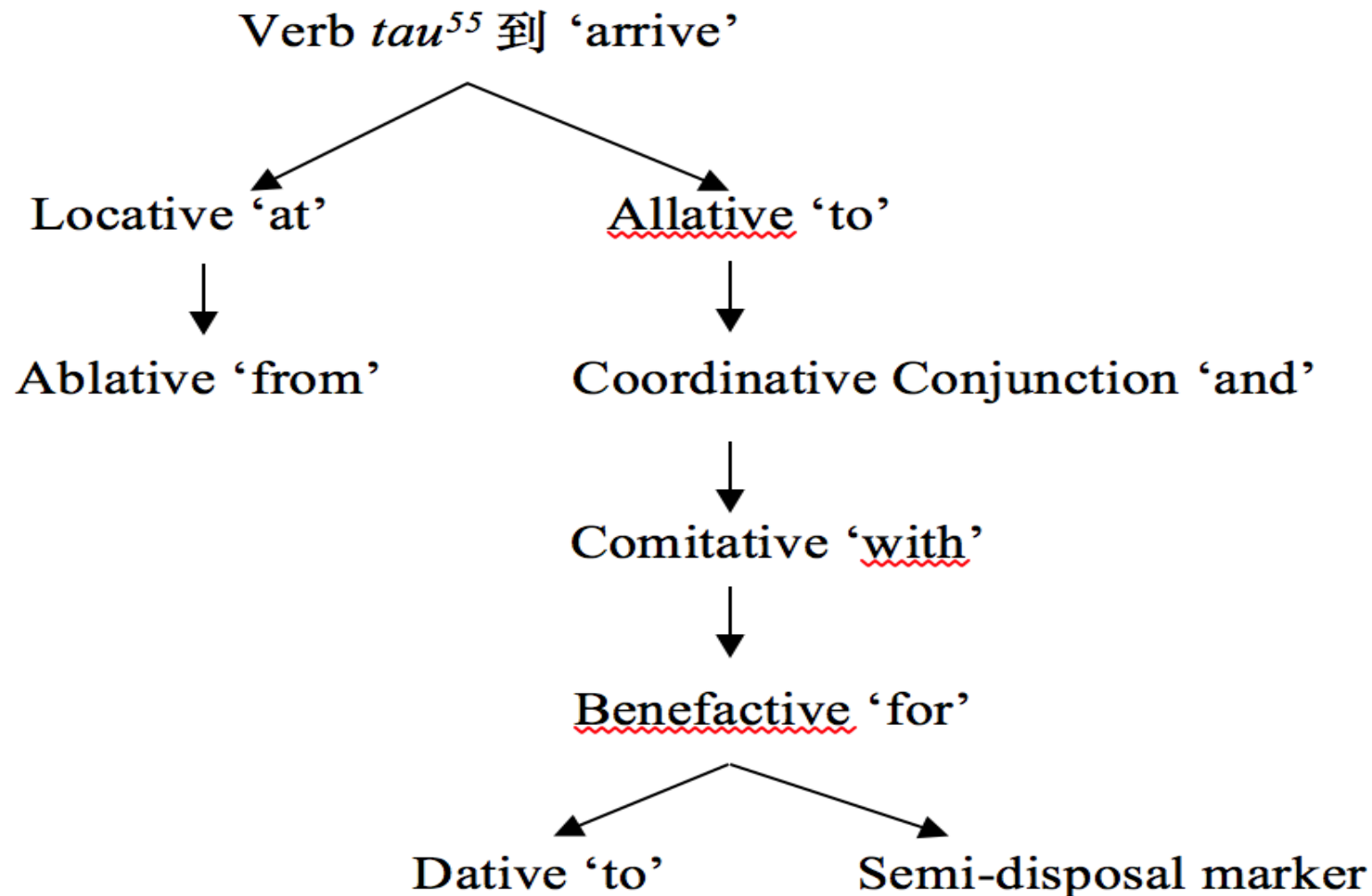


Figure 1. The pathway of grammaticalization of *tau*⁵⁵ 到 in the Chengguan dialect

3.1. Lexical verb ‘arrive’ > allative ‘to’

Tong (2006):

“‘到’由表示处所、时间位置到为另一动作提供处所时间位置，完成了由动词到介词的转化[……]经历了普通动词 – 次要动词 – 介词这样一个变化过程。When *tau*⁵⁵ 到 becomes an element which indicates the time or the place for another verb, it has accomplished the transition from verb to preposition [...] the process is : verb – second verb – preposition”

3.2. Lexical verb ‘arrive’ > locative ‘at’

‘Syntactical change’ (‘句法位置的改变’, Liu, Cao & Wu. 1995. 161-164).

Assume that the source structure is :

S + *tau*⁵⁵ 到 ‘arrive’ + NP₁ (place) + V₂ + (NP₂)

(15) 我 到 操 坪 里 等 你。

ŋo²¹ tau⁵⁵ ts^hau³³ p^hiaŋ¹³ li⁴² ten³⁵ n_i²¹

1SG arrive playground inside wait 2SG

I’ll go to the playground and wait you there.

3.2. Lexical verb ‘arrive’ > locative ‘at’

When we concentrate on the verb *ten*³⁵ 等 ‘wait’, *tau*⁵⁵ 到 becomes a second verb, and the action ‘arrive’ is no longer important: *tau*⁵⁵ 到 acts as an element which introduces the NP_(place) :

(16) 我 到 操 坪 里 等 你。

ŋo²¹ tau⁵⁵ ts^hau³³ p^hian¹³ li⁴² ten³⁵ n_i²¹

1SG preposition playground inside wait 2SG

I’ll wait you (when I arrive) to the playground.

3.2. Lexical verb ‘arrive’ > locative ‘at’

Besides, there is no elements which can keep the ‘movement’ properties of *tau*⁵⁵ 到, *tau*⁵⁵ 到 could be interpreted as a stative preposition, compare :

(17) 我 到 屋 里 吃 饭。

no²¹ tau⁵⁵ u⁴² li⁴² tɕ^hia⁴² fan²²

1SG at house inside eat rice

I'll have dinner at home.

(18) 我 到 屋 里 去 吃 饭。

no²¹ tau⁵⁵ u⁴² li⁴² tɕ^hi⁵⁵ tɕ^hia⁴² fan²².

1SG arrive house inside go eat rice

I'll go home for dinner.

3.3. Locative ‘at’ > ablative ‘from’

‘Semantic change’ (‘词义变化’, Liu, Cao & Wu. 1995. 164-166) triggered by the context.

The source meaning : locative preposition ‘at’

- (19) 尔 到 塘 里 游 泳。
- n_i^{21} tau^{55} i^{35} $t^h oŋ^{13}$ li^{42} $iəu^{13}$ $yuən^{55}$
- 2SG in this pond inside swim

You swim in the pond.

3.3. Locative ‘at’ > ablative ‘from’

The meaning of the verb brings another interpretation for the preposition *tau*⁵⁵ 到 (bridging context):

- (20) 尔 到 塘 里 钓 鱼。
- n_1^{21} τau^{55} i^{35} $t^h o\eta^{13}$ li^{42} $tiau^{55}$ η^{13}
- 2SG in/from this pond inside fishing

You fish in this pond/You get the fish from the pond.

3.3. Locative ‘at’ > ablative ‘from’

Then, when the NP_(place) is a place where human being cannot physically ‘stay’, the target meaning ‘from’ becomes the only interpretation: it depends on the specific context (‘deprivation’ verb)

(21) 尔 到 塑 料 袋 里 拿 鱼。

n²¹ tau⁵⁵ so⁴² liau²² t^hai²² li⁴² la⁴² ŋ¹³

2SG from plastic bag inside take fish

You take the fish from the plastic bag.

3.4. Lexical verb ‘arrive’ > conjunction ‘and’

Context-induced reinterpretation (Heine. 2002)

The source meaning of *tau*⁵⁵ 到: verb ‘arrive’ :

- (22) 我 到 长 沙 要 两 个 钟 头。
ŋo²¹ tau⁵⁵ tɕ^hoŋ¹³ sa³³ iau⁵⁵ lion²¹ ko⁵⁵ tɕəŋ³³ t^hœu¹³
1SG arrive Changsha need two CLF hour
It takes me two hours to go to Changsha.

3.4. Lexical verb ‘arrive’ > conjunction ‘and’

When *tau*⁵⁵ 到 is used to connect two NPs_(place), it can be interpreted as ‘to’ semantically, but it is still a verb syntactically :

- (23) 平 江 到 长 沙 要 两 个 钟 头 。
p^hian¹³ kon³³ tau⁵⁵ tɕ^hon¹³ sa³³ iau⁵⁵ lion²¹ ko⁵⁵ tɕən³³ t^hœu¹³
Pingjiang to Changsha need two CLF hour
It takes two hours from Pingjiang to Changsha.

3.4. Lexical verb ‘arrive’ > conjunction ‘and’

Then *tau*⁵⁵ 到 is used to connect two NPs_(human):

- (24) 佢 ☐ 屋 里 从 大 人 到 细 人 ☐ ☐ ☐ 吃 零 碎。
e²¹ li⁴² ɯ⁴² li⁴² ts^həŋ¹³ t^hai²² nin¹³ tau⁵⁵ ɕi⁵⁵ nin¹³ xa²² tɕ^həŋ⁵⁵ in²¹ tɕ^hia⁴² liaŋ¹³ ɕi⁵⁵.
3SG POSS house inside from big people to small people all like eat snack

From adult to children, everyone likes snacks in this family.

3.4. Lexical verb ‘arrive’ > conjunction ‘and’

When *ts^həŋ¹³* 从 ‘from’ is removed, we can translate the phrase as either ‘from A to B’ or ‘A and B’:

- (25) 佢 □ 屋 里 大 人 到 细 人 [……]
e²¹ li⁴² u⁴² li⁴² t^hai²² nin¹³ tau⁵⁵ ɕi⁵⁵ nin¹³ [...]
3SG POSS.KIN house inside big people to/and small people
The adults and the children of his family/ From the adults to the children [...]

3.4. Lexical verb ‘arrive’ > conjunction ‘and’

Finally, the allative meaning is ruled out:

(26) 我 买 哒 苹 果 到 梨 子。

ŋo²¹ mai²¹ ta⁴² p^hin¹³ kuø³⁵ tau⁵⁵ li¹³ tsɿ³⁵

1SG buy PFV apple and pear

I bought the apple and the pear.

3.5. Conjunction > comitative ‘with’

This evolution is rare (antigrammaticalization), but it is not impossible (cf. Wu. 2017 ; Jiang. 2012. 2014). We assume here this evolution in the Chengguan dialect due to ‘analogy’, compare (26) with (27) :

(27) 我 买 哒 苹 果 同/凑 梨 子。

ŋo²¹ mai²¹ ta⁴² p^hin¹³ kuø³⁵ t^həŋ⁵⁵/ts^hɑ⁵⁵ li¹³ tsɿ³⁵

1SG buy PFV apple and pear

I bought the apple and the pear.

*tau*⁵⁵ 到, *t^həŋ*⁵⁵ 同 and *ts^hɑ*⁵⁵ 凑 share the same functions as conjunction, comitative, benefactive, dative and demi-disposal preposition.

3.6. Comitative > benefactive ‘for’

Context-induced reinterpretation

In the structure ‘NP_(agent A) + *tau*⁵⁵ 到 + NP_(agent B) + V [+reciprocal]’, *tau*⁵⁵ 到 is a comitative preposition:

- (28) 我 到 尔 □ □ °
ηo²¹ tau⁵⁵ n_i²¹ tɕiɛ⁴² tɕin³³
1SG with 2SG quarrel
I quarrel with you.

3.6. Comitative > benefactive ‘for’

When the verb doesn't demand two agents, it is possible to interpret the agent B as a beneficial :

(29) 我 到 尔 去 买 菜 。

ŋo²¹ tau⁵⁵ n_i²¹ tɕ^hi⁵⁵ mai²¹ ts^hai⁵⁵

1SG with/for 2SG go buy fresh food

I will go buy fresh food with/for you.

3.6. Comitative > benefactive ‘for’

When the verb demands a beneficial, it is more natural to interpret *tau*⁵⁵ 到 as a benefactive preposition :

- (30) 我 到 尔 整 病。
 ŋo²¹ tau⁵⁵ n_i²¹ tɕaŋ³⁵ p^hiaŋ²²
 1SG for 2SG heal illness

I will cure you (I will cure the illness for you).

*tau*⁵⁵ 到 is still on its way of grammaticalization (bridging context > switch context): we cannot rule out the comitative interpretation in (29); in (30), with some specific verbs, the benefactive interpretation is the only one.

3.7. Benefactive > dative 'to'

In $NP_1 + \textit{tau}^{55}$ 到 (benefactive) + $NP_2 + V_{\text{speech}}$, we have tendency to interpret \textit{tau}^{55} 到 as a dative preposition 'to', compare (31) and (32) :

(31) 我 到 尔 写 信。

ηo^{21} \textit{tau}^{55} η^{21} \textit{cia}^{35} \textit{cin}^{55}

1SG for/to 2SG write letter

I write a letter for you/I write you a letter.

3.7. Benefative > dative ‘to’

When the verb demands an direct/indirect object, and there is no element which can take on this position, we interpret n_i^{21} 尔 as an IO, thus *tau*⁵⁵ 到 becomes a dative preposition :

- (32) 我 到 尔 话。
 ηo^{21} *tau*⁵⁵ n_i^{21} ua^{22}
 1SG to 2SG talk
 I talk to you.

3.8. Benefative > semi-disposal marker

The disposal marker function of *tau*⁵⁵ 到 is still on its way of grammaticalization, compare (33) and (13):

(33) 我 到 尔 剥 哒 个 橘 子。

t^ha³³ tau⁵⁵ n²¹ po⁴² ta⁴² ko⁵⁵ tɕuei⁴² tsɿ³⁵

1SG for 2SG peel PFV CLF orange

I peeled an orange for you.

3.8. Benefative > semi-disposal marker

(13) 他 到 橘 子 剥 哒 皮。

t^ha³³ tau⁵⁵ tɕuei⁴² tsɿ³⁵ po⁴² ta⁴² p^{hi}13

3SG DM orange peel PFV skin

He peeled the orange (of its skin) /He peeled the skin for the orange.

Therefore, we regard it as a subset of the benefactive function.

4. Conclusion

- In this paper, we have analyzed the syncretism of *tau*⁵⁵ 到 in the Chengguan dialect, and we assume that the context-induced reinterpretation plays a key role in its process of grammaticalization on the one hand, and the analogy on the other hand;
- Every step of the grammaticalizational chain can be found in other Sinitic languages, but the total evolution is quiet rare;
- In the future, we would like to study the dialects of the counties which bordering Pingjiang to see if the contact influences exist.

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